HOW SOLDIERS VIEW THE WAR

--by Jim Lesar

Within the past year a number of soldiers have refused to obey orders sending them to fight in Vietnam. Thus the rebellion of conscience against the war has spread from the doctrinaire pacifists and conscientious objectors to those in the Army itself who oppose the war on moral and political grounds.

This in itself is significant. But how widespread is opposition to the war within the Army? What do the soldiers themselves actually think about the war? How is the morale of the American soldiers?

It is perhaps a little risky to hazard over-all generalizations about the feelings and attitudes of American soldiers on the basis of one's own experience in the Army. Yet during the period I was in the Army, from August, 1964 to June of 1966, I talked to hundreds of soldiers about the war in Vietnam, and I feel that this experience offers me some basis for viewing the situation as I do.

What soldiers think about the war largely depends on whether or not they've been to college. Among most of the troops in my barracks who had been to college for any length of time there was a fairly strong feeling of opposition to the war. This was particularly true of those who were draftees, as most of them were. They hated the Army, and they could not see much sense in fighting a war in Asia. Of course the intensity of feeling among this group varied a good deal, but in several cases it was quite strong. I remember one particular instance in which a soldier told his sergeant: "Sarge, if we were in Vietnam and you tried to lead me into the jungle to fight the Viet Cong, I'd shoot you in the back."

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The anti-war feeling which does exist among the college-educated soldiers has, however, no common political or ideological basis. It comes either from persons on the right or on the left, or from those who have no discernable political beliefs at all. Next to myself, the soldier who was most violently in opposition to the war was a business school graduate who read the Wall Street Journal every day. He expressed his opposition to the war in numerous ways; by dressing as sloppily as he could--he never laced or tied his shoestrings; by going on sick call at least once a week for a period of five months; and by doing as much as possible to foul up his work as an accountant on those

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THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT ABROAD

--by Ann Lachenbruch

The University of Toronto Committee to End the War in Vietnam initiated a call for Canadian Student Days of Protest on November 1 and 12. The Canadian Mobilization apparently is being organized along the same lines as the American, in terms of only setting broad guidelines for local actions. Our Canadian counterpart, however, has the war in Vietnam as its only issue with the official slogans "Bring the Troops Home Now" and "End Canadian Complicity." This second slogan is particularly appropriate considering the trade Canada does in the arms industry while pretending to maintain politically neutral position. Since the call was issued in early September, the Committee has received support from among others, A.J. Muste, head of the Fifth Avenue Parade Committee, professors at Sir George Williams University in Montreal and the Alberta Young New Democrats. The Young New Democrats is the youth group of the New Democratic Party which is the Canadian equivalent of the British Labor Party.

Another encouraging anti-war protest is that which was organized throughout Europe for October 16 by the Federation Nationale des Jeunes Gardes Socialistes de Belgique. The call came from Liege, Belgium for an International Anti-Militarist demonstration and was soon responded to by youth groups in Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and Holland. Next week the Crisis hopes to be able to present more detailed news on the European demonstrations.

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THE NOVEMBER MOBILIZATION: MADISON

--by Terry Brown, co-chairman
of the Mobilization Subcommittee

"...but that we know about the war in Vietnam persuades us that it is wrong, in its purposes and barbarous in its effects. This belief makes impossible the moral luxury of acquiescence, and obligates us to take as forceful a stand as possible against the war which our government calls us to accept..."

-From a resolution presented to members
of the November Mobilization Committee

This is the fundamental thought of those who met in Cleveland Sept. 10-11 and formed themselves into the Nov. 8th Mobilization Committee. Why was a "National Mobilization for Peace in Vietnam, Human Rights and Economic Justice" chosen as "a forceful a stand as possible" against the government's war in Vietnam? Why then, seen from a local perspective should one think there could be any meaning or consequence from the mobilization of students in Madison, Wisconsin?

As the war escalates individual disaffection mounts. As people search for a way of displaying their opposition to the war they begin to show a willingness to coalesce, to unite with groups that under other conditions are strange bedfellows indeed. "The Southern Christian Educational Fund" and the "Socialist Workers Party" are but two of the groups in this broad affiliation. But this is not only a Nov. Mobilization against the war. Included in its title are "Human Rights and Economic Justice." Not only is there a growing consciousness of what is necessary tactically for opposition to be fruitful, but there is also the emergence of a "framework"-there is the growth of a conceptual consciousness which understands that Vietnam is not a morbid happening, that it is not an aberration, that it is not an event occurring in a vacuum. For, example, when the harrassment of SNCC began in Atlanta this September the Nov. Mobilization Committee immediately sent a resolution expressing their solidarity with SNCC. It reads in part: "...Humphrey's statement (insupport of Atlanta's harassment) amounted to approval of a domestic parallel to American foreign policy: In Vietnam the U. S. suppresses revolution and self-determination by napalm and then casts the blame for the resulting devastation upon those who are attempting to determine for themselves their own form of government. At home, in a similar manner, the guilt for "inciting a riot" is placed--not upon the policeman who pulled the trigger--but upon Stokely Carmichael and SNCC..."

It is clear that people are beginning to see the content for the war in Vietnam and moreover see which groups and sentiments are necessarily united with them in an anti-war position. It is this growth of a "movement," this strengthening which is confronting the war leviathan

The importance of the November mobilization for Madison is that it is a show of support of the Nov. Mobilization committee's position and provides a show of national strength and unity against the war. But there is an importance peculiar to the Madison Campus which is to be stressed. The intrinsic fluidity of a university campus with its large annual turnover and its accessibility to discussion, necessitates a constant clarification of views and goals for such groups as the CNV. This fluidity also provides an opportunity to orient new people to our anti-war position. The Nov. Mobilization presents an opportunity to reach new people.

Among the methods of reaching people is distributing prior to the days of the mobilization an "orientation packet." The packet could include a chronology and analysis of the war, an analysis of protest and a description of the workings of the committee. The days could also be used to organize discussions on the war, the draft protest, and other topical questions.

The Nov. Mobilization is a call to all of the anti-war forces to unite despite differences, and with a respect for these differences to show our unrelenting anti-war position. The Nov. Mobilization is an opportunity to manifest our solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed throughout the world.

THE NOVEMBER MOBILIZATION: NATIONAL

(The following article consists of excepts from a speech delivered by Sidney H. Peck at the recent Cleveland Conference. Mr. Peck is Coordinator of the University Circle Teach-In Committee of Cleveland.)

I think...we are talking always about a mobilization of sentiment and outlook. A mobilization that reflects the whole spectrum of opposition to the war. Thus a cardinal point to emphasize over and over again is the unified character of this mobilization -- its non-exclusionary approach. It is an effort to involve and to include all those -- each and every one -- who are in any way, for whatever reasons, opposed to this war!

Now, if we think of what we can do in the very immediate future - namely, what can be done prior to the elections -- I believe there is general agreement that you can't really develop a mobilization of truly massive proportions in the immediate future. But you can begin to strive for certain kinks of objectives and goals. I want to state several objectives...

The first objective would be to demonstrate the resurgence of effort and development of an initiative of our own. We are not going to respond to what the administration does. Rather, we are going to move on a new initiative of our own. We are not going to let the administration or the governing powers, those who have decided to continue this war and excalate it to the point of nuclear catastrophe, tell us what we should do!

We are going to make a beginning at it prior to the elections. We are going to show the American people, and the world, that regardless of the profound and real difficulties of an ideological, political and other sort that separate and divide us, and that reflect genuine differences in the constituencies we represent -- that, nevertheless, we have come to a realization that we can no longer allow those difficulties to loom as obstacles in the development of a unified effort. That is a second objective.

A third objective, in addition to the resurgence of concern and development of a unified effort, would be to make sure that the issue of this war remains a fundamental issue during the election period. Thus, an important goal would be that the administration politicians, those who want to hide this issue under the rug, are confronted with the question. We are going to do all that we can to insure that the American electorate and general public are extremely conscious of the issues involved in this war.

A fourth objective would be to develop and inject this qestion of the war in the electoral scene in the multitude of forms already in motion by national organizations and/or by local committees. Forms that are congenial to what given groups at this point believe are the correct tactical ways of most effectively expressing opposition to the war. Forms and approaches which, in fact, represent the full spectrum of outlook in the anti war and peace movement. In this objective is a bulit in hope that a fundamental acceptance of the principle of diversity will become an important and meaningful kind of principle to which we can all adhere. That is to say, the development of a mutual respect for differences of approach, so that all tendencies in opposition to the war are included, irrespective of the particular disagreement over this or that tactic...

And, finally, the last objective would be to develop a kind of ad hoc mechanism to cultivate the essential groundwork for a mobilization of truly massive proportions in the near future...

The four days prior to the election -- say, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday -- can be a time in which all national organizations, all regional groups, all local groups, make plans to express whatever they now have in motion, and, at the same time, to show their respect for the unity of expression in opposition to the war...

In other words, there are many kinds of things that can be done. The important thing is that they are done witha mutual respect for what is taking place in an effort to coordinate and minimize organization conflicts. It is particularly important not to render holy judgment that what is being done in "our" group is far superior to what others are engaged in! I think that is the spirit we are trying to develop during this four-day concentrated effort.

SOLDIERS VIEW THE WAR -- cont. from page 1

rare occasions when he did any work at all. His detailed knowledge of the Stock Market put him in touch with officers who asked his advice on what stocks to invest in. Whenever the opportunity arose he would complain to the officers that the military was destroying our country, and the war in Viet Nam was likely to ruin our economy. Whenever the Viet Cong won a big victory he and several others cheered.

The college-educated draftees grew more disgusted with the Army and more sickened by the Viet Nam war as the situation in Viet Nam grew progressively worse. Many of the read the copies of the National Guardian, the Minority of One, Ramparts, and I.F. Stone's Weekly which I passed around. Several read with great interest books by Felix Green Edgar Snow, Wilfred Burchett, Fred J. Cook and C. Wright Mills which I recommended to them. They began to see the larger implications of the war. Just before I got out of the army, there was a peace demonstration at the Washington Monument; for the first time, four other soldiers from my barracks attended a peace demonstration with me.

There was also some anti-war sentiment among the university ROTC-trained lieutenants; I think. At least they ignored the complaints made to them by other soldiers about the pamphlets I was passing out and the comments about the war I made. They managed to stand up for free discussion of the Vietnam issue against the pressure of the old-guard sergeants who reported me as a Communist agent. On occassions a lieutenant would cover up for me to keep me from getting in trouble. That happenned when I made an appointment to talk to Senator Wayne Morse on a Friday morning. I told the lieutenant under whom I worked about this appointment as we walked together to the public library during our usual longer-than-permitted lunch-break. "You think you are going to take off Army time to do that?" he asked. I told him that I planned to go on sick call that morning. "You talk to your sergeant about that," he said. "I didn't hear anything about this." When I returned to the office Friday afternoon I was told the lieutenant wanted to see me. He was very eager to hear what Senator Morse had to say about the war.

The lietenants sometines connected part of the propagandistic "training" sessions that each soldier had to attend once a month. ONe day a lieutenant Greene led the discussion of an Army film on Vietnam which we had just seen. Lieutenant Greene knew I was opposed to the war in Vietnam and kept trying to provoke me so he could get a hot argument going on the war issue. Finally I spoke up and began to attack the lie of the State Department White Paper that the war was started and maintained by "aggression from the North." I cited figures from appendix D of the White Paper showing that nearly all of the weapons captured from the NLF were of American origin. At this point a sergeant in the back of the room bellowed out, "Don't trust his statistics they might be Communist statistics."

Lieutenant Greene blanched. "If I understand Private Lesar's point he was quoting figures of the U.S. State Department."

"Yeah," grumbled the sergeant, "that's what I mean. How do we know that a private group like that's not Communist?"

Lieutenant Greene struggled to explain that the State Department was a part of the American government, but it was to no avail.

While a high percentage of those who have some exposure to college are either opposed to the war in Vietnam or are indifferent to it, the poor and the Negroes who enlisted in the army are mainly in favor of it. Partly this is because the army offers to these persons the hope of security, job training, travel opportunities, and a higher status than they could ever obtain in civilian life. And as the average level of education in this group is extremely low--often eighth or ninth grade- it is hard to reach them through pamphlets or books.

But the most reactionary element in the services, aside from the brass, is the army chaplain. The army chaplains have been correctly referred to by J.M. Swomley as "The military's fifth column in the Church." No group is more in favor of the war effort in Vietnam.. The army chaplain always speaks at the monthly training sessions and provides for those who feel any need of them the moral blessing and intellectual justification for the ugly deeds of the people of Vietnam.

One of the problems which apparently obsesses the army and to which army chaplains are constantly addressing themselves is that of morale. The army has had a thing about this ever since the Korean War indicated that a good many American POW's really didn't know what they

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TO SOLDIERS VIEW THE WAR -- cont. from page 1

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NO SOLDIERS VIET NAM WAR--cont.from page 4

more fighting for. The GI "turncoats" caused a certain hysteria in the United States, and the Army promptlyset out to correct this by drafting a short "American Fighting Man's Code" which troops in Basic Training are supposed to memorize. It is about on par with the Boy Scout Oath, except that the latter is twice as hard to memorize, having 12, rather than 6, tenets.

But the problem of morale remains. American soldiers are very confused about this war, probably more so than about the Korean War. They don't know what they are fighting for or against. For that very reason it might not be too hard to disrupt segments of the Army and weaken its morale further. At this point nobody can predict what the results would be if a full-scale anti-war campaign was directed at the American soldier.

But there certainly are a number of means available at present by which such a campaign might be made effective. Some sort of anti-war organizations might be formed within the Army by sympathetic soldiers who would work with civilian peace groups to disseminate anti-war literature. Possibly some of the politically radical and anti-war priests and preachers might enter the Army as chaplains and use their posts to disseminate anti-war literature and to encourage and protect those who refuse to be sent to Viet Nam. Possibly Senators such as Wayne Morse might secure invitations to speak to troops on military posts about the War in Viet Nam and thus counter some of the brain-washing to which the troops are subjected. Most GI's in the States are bored and lonely. They drift into the USO centers established in most cities near Army posts on the pathetic hope that they'll meet some halfway good-looking young lady..So maybe some of the young ladies in the various peace groups should gain entrance to the USO's and do some anti-war educating there. Or perhaps anti-war students on campuses near bases should invite some soldiers to parties on campus.

Nothing much might come of such efforts.On the other hand, I feel quite sure that there are a good many soldiers who are already opposed to the war, and a good many more might be if they had a little better knowledge of the history behind this war. At any rate, it might be worth a try.

EDITORIAL

Earlier this week, the Madison City Council refused a request of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom that it be allowed to set up a card table on the sidewalk on University Avenue. The WIL planned to use the table to collect signatures on petitions protesting the use of napalm in south Vietnam.

Alderman Flaten of the 11th ward was quoted as saying, "The Council doesn't want to go on record for use of sidewalks for such a purpose."

Flaten misses the point. No one asked or expected the humanitarians of the City Council to come out in favor of something so radical as opposition to the indiscriminate burning of men, women and children. All that the Council was asked to do was to allow the WIL to use a sidewalk.

Madison's sidewalks are used by all sorts of public and private groups for all sorts of purposes. Veterans and charitable groups solicit funds; newspapers are sold; candidates distribute campaign literature. The WIL has the same right to use the sidewalks as any other group or individual.

The City Council needs to be reminded that opposition to the war does not make one a second-class citizen. A few months ago some Council members attempted to restrict the right of anti-war groups to distribute literature in public parks. Fortunately, that attempt was defeated But the latest action of the Council reveals that it is still ignorant of the fact that free use of public property is the right of all citizens.

THE DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE WAR IN VIETNAM

---by Jeffrey R. Orenstein

...are make their headlines on the battlefield. Their destructiveness, however, takes place not only at the front but also permeates the distant nations that are involved.

While the military conflict in Vietnam runs through its dizzying spiral of escalation upon escalation, those who are sensitive to domestic political happenings must fight against the home-front ravages of the war. In short, due to a heightened feeling of national frustration, uncertainty, and fear that any war inevitably arouses, and due to the tendency of the frightened to feel "If the Communists are killing our boys in Asia, we had better make sure anyone who doesn't conform to the American way, i.e., those who disagree with us, is persecuted by whatever means necessary.", we are tottering on the brink of another cataclysm of anti-intellectualism, repression, etc. that could be reminiscent of the McCarthy Era and Korean fear.

During the Korean War (when fewer Americans had such grave doubts of the impropriety of their Government's policy), McCarthy and his sympathizers (not to mention MacArthur's military clique) were allowed to run roughshod over the civil liberties, rights, and egalitarian beliefs that underlie a liberal democratic system. (The rhetoric of our system, at any rate, professes to be of this type.) The effects of this concerted assault on the humanity, the raison d'etre, of our system are still being felt in critical places like the Department of State.

From diversity, from constructive opposition, from daring to challenge the Establishment's policies inevitably must come the constructive alternatives and new ideas that our system today so desperately needs. And these ideas will not have the currency they deserve in a new McCarthyism.

If a system does not permit this, if it does not consciously encourage this, then it cannot even hope to be able to run fast enough to keep up with a dynamic and revolutionary world, much less to stay ahead of the issues of the times.

Those who oppose the war have a duty to guard against any trends of this kind. We have a duty, that is, if we oppose this war from an intellectual and unemotional base of reason and a desire to improve our system--we have no duty to anything if we oppose simply for the sake of opposition. We must always be on guard against the domestic political side as well as the other inhumanitarian aspects of the Administration's war.

Let us have the sense and courage not only to vigorously denounce those who are guilty of platitudes, name-calling, and oversimplification, but to make doubly sure that in our commitment to rationality we are not guilty of inadvertently using irrationality ourselves.

We are confident that our position is politically and morally right. One duty that comes of this is to make our opposition known. Another duty is to pursue objectives with an eye (and a wary one, at that) to keeping our society from suffering incredible damages from the emotionalism and panic that are unfortunate by-products of the ultimate in human irrationality------war.

The basic workshop on the war in Vietnam meets every Monday night at 8 P.M. in the Union.

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